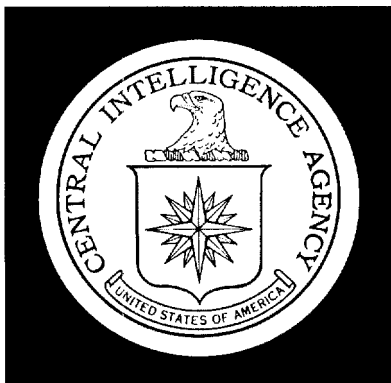
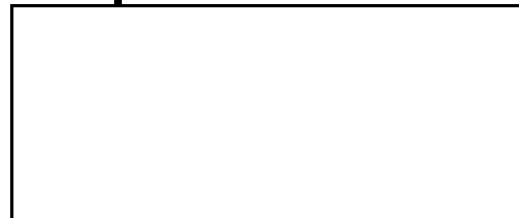


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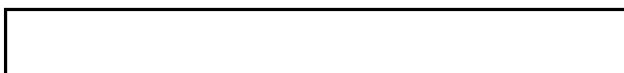
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[redacted]

South Vietnam - Cambodia: Saigon is increasing pressure against Communist forces along the Cambodian border.

There is growing evidence of cooperation between South Vietnamese and Cambodian forces in cross-border operations against Communist base areas, particularly those straddling South Vietnam's III and IV corps regions.

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[redacted]

[redacted] In at least one recent instance, sizable South Vietnamese ground forces crossed into Cambodia to attack elements of a North Vietnamese regiment.

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Saigon does not appear to have formulated a uniform policy on operations into Cambodia, but it probably is keeping a fairly close watch on them. Meanwhile, efforts are being made to seal the border, where possible, so that Communist units can be trapped if they attempt to leave Cambodia.

The Communists are apparently still adjusting to the uncertainties of the situation in Cambodia. Even before Sihanouk's ouster, the enemy headquarters in South Vietnam (COSVN) reportedly ordered all Communist military units in border areas to remain stationary, avoid clashes with Cambodian troops, and help to create an atmosphere conducive to negotiations with the Cambodians. In some areas along the border, however, COSVN called for the transfer of ordnance, foodstuffs, and medical facilities to South Vietnam to prevent critical supplies from falling into the hands of Cambodian military forces.

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Although there has been no hard evidence to date of any significant enemy troop withdrawals from Cambodia into Vietnam, reports persist of COSVN's intention to relocate its headquarters facilities from Cambodia northward to the sanctuary of the Lao panhandle. In most areas along the border, however, the Communists appear to be adopting a wait-and-see attitude pending instructions from Hanoi on how to cope with the new situation.

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Laos: The government is proceeding cautiously with its response to the Lao Communist peace proposal.

Prime Minister Souvanna has sent a telegram to his half-brother Prince Souphanouvong calling attention to the presence of North Vietnamese troops in Laos and suggesting that this problem be dealt with through the International Control Commission mechanism. The telegram does not constitute the government's official response to the Neo Lao Hak Sat, but is a reply to a personal message from Souphanouvong.

Souvanna is now in the midst of canvassing various political and regional factions in an attempt to develop a consensus on how best to deal with the Communist peace proposal. The King has strongly urged that Souvanna formulate a reply that would appear reasonable and forthcoming without giving away anything.

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(continued)

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Peking has issued a strong statement of support for the Lao Communists. A Chinese Foreign Ministry release yesterday condemned the introduction of Thai troops into Laos as a grave military adventure and war escalation. The statement went on to pledge that China would not sit idle in the face of expanded warfare in Laos and was prepared to share losses with the Laotian people. The warning is similar to Chinese statements of support to North Vietnam in the mid-1960s, rhetoric that did not commit the Chinese to any course of action. The statement's principal purpose may be to play on Thai fears regarding Chinese intentions.

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